FREDDIE KING

Freddie King is among that incredible family of musicians from Texas. Texas people seem to have some kind of magic that keeps their music current no matter what styles, fads and changes come along to drag the record business first one way and then another. Blues...pure and simple.

Of the three guitar-playing "Kings" Freddie has always been the least publicized, but many blues freaks have regarded him as the most solid musician of the three. His style has always been more truth than flash.

At any rate, Freddie began his full time pursuit of music in 1950 when, at 16, he split from Gilmer, Texas to see what was going on in Chicago. He hung out for a few years, jamming here and there, and finally landed a job with the Sonny Cooper Band. After a year with Cooper, he moved to the Sonny Scott Band and then joined Payton and The Blues Cats.

It was during this Chicago period that Freddie did his first session work with Chester (Howlin' Wolf) Burnett, The Four Blazes and some other Chicago people.

In 1961, Freddie had his first hit with "You Got To Love Her With A Feelin'." The back side was his classic "Have You Ever Loved A Woman." A few months later, Freddie gave us his first instrumental, "Hideaway."

Since those early days, Freddie has turned out nine albums, most of them for the King label. It was during this time that he layed down a lot of tunes that he and Sonny Thompson were writing, both together and separately. Things like "The Stumble," "I'm Tore Down" and "Side Tracked."

More recently, Freddie has done a couple of albums with King Curtis for the Cotillion label.

Late in 1970, Freddie met Denny Cordell. Cordell had shared a long standing admiration with his partner, Leon Russell, for the King and together they signed Freddie to the Shelter Records Family, and then Leon and Freddie flew off to Chicago--------. Leon brought along his whole band and Duck Dunn flew in from Memphis to play bass.

After hearing the rough mixes a couple of dozen times, I find it hard to communicate the excitement that comes from this new album. Leon Russell, whose piano technique is as immediately recognizeable as his voice, has managed to fit perfectly into his role as a side man. Funky, ballzy rhythm chording. The rest of the band is incredibly tight and Freddie is right there, right up front.

Freddie King is back. "Getting Ready," with Love from Shelter.

Bill Ashford
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